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SUBJECT: CANADA'S POST-CONFLICT STABILIZATION AND
RECONSTRUCTION CAPABILITY

1. (SBU) Summary: Canada's "Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force" (START) has become a key component of its foreign affairs architecture. Its Ottawa headquarters works on policy formulation, while inter-agency teams now operate in Haiti, Uganda, Colombia, and Kandahar -- and soon also in Islamabad -- on missions including de-mining, training of police and peacekeepers, support to multilateral peace-enforcement missions, and governance capacity-building.

START's staff greatly values close consultations with its U.S. counterpart and expressed particular interest in an on-going dialogue on policy development for intervention thresholds in failed and fragile states, new approaches to training for field officers, and the justice rapid response concept, as well as discussions of specific countries where we are both working. End Summary.

START FINDS ITS FOOTING

2. (SBU) Now well into its third year of operations, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's START has established itself as an important component in Canada's foreign affairs architecture and deployment. It brings a coordinated approach to managing Canada's participation in reconstruction and stabilization activities worldwide. START's twin objectives remain a mix of policy formulation and operations:

- to ensure timely, coordinated, and effective policy strategies and operational responses by Canada to natural and human-made crises that require whole-of-government action; and,

- to plan and deliver coherent and effective conflict prevention, crisis response, and stabilization initiatives in fragile states and states in transition in which Canada has humanitarian or political interests.

3. (SBU) Contrary to earlier doubts that START could survive bureaucratic re-alignments at DFAIT under the "new" Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper since 2006, START officials now express confidence that policy-makers recognize that START has more than proven its worth and is indeed an increasingly valuable resource. They admit, however, START continues to struggle with funding, personnel, and its place in the bureaucracy (laments fairly

common throughout DFAIT).

14. (SBU) In April, however, the Treasury Board completed a review of START operations and blessed a transformation to multi-year funding, which should help to increase START's future viability and enhance its ability to plan. Its current funding is part of a larger "Global Peace and Security Fund" (GPSF), which also underwrites a "Global Peace and Security Program," a "Global Peace Operations Program," and a "Glyn Berry Program" (named for the Canadian diplomat killed in Afghanistan in 2006) to support START field operations, peace operations, some related G-8 commitments, and democratization. Current funding for START is C\$135 million (approximately equivalent in USD), of which C\$35 million goes to programs in Afghanistan, but START's share of the pie could more than double in coming years.

15. (SBU) START currently has 73 members in its Ottawa

Q5. (SBU) START currently has 73 members in its Ottawa headquarters at DFAIT, as well as officers in Haiti, Uganda, Colombia, and Kandahar. Canada does not have an equivalent to the USG's Active Response Corps, however, so it either sends its Ottawa-based DFAIT officers on assignment (Haiti, Uganda, Afghanistan, and -- soon -- Islamabad), directly hires individuals for a specific task (Colombia), or pays for secondments from other agencies (many of the positions in Kandahar). START has developed a roster of DFAIT officers who have post-conflict reconstruction skills and may be interested in field deployment, but START has no system for directly recruiting those officers, other than an appeal for volunteers.

16. (SBU) START has now developed several coordination models

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for its work in the field:

- START can act as a catalyst or convenor, taking the lead in bringing together all relevant geographic and functional partners within DFAIT and throughout the Canadian government to work on the development of the fragile states analytical framework;

- START can co-lead crisis management efforts with geographic counterparts, as in the case for most natural disasters and in Haiti and Sudan, providing leadership drawing on experience across emergencies and peace operations, while DFAIT's regional bureaus provide expertise and vision regarding Canada's long-term bilateral relationship and links to various ethnic Diaspora in Canada;

- START can provide targeted policy and program support under the leadership of a country-specific DFAIT division, as in the case of Afghanistan;

- START can work with DFAIT's Consular Affairs bureau to respond to unique emergency situations, such as the 2006 Lebanon evacuation, a complex operation that involved intelligence, coordination with military units, and large-scale resource allocations.

FOCUS ON AFGHANISTAN

17. (SBU) With Afghanistan as Canada's number one foreign policy priority, START provides funding to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to run a police training program in Kandahar, while directly running a justice and corrections initiative. START has also been very involved in Canada's G-8 initiative to improve border control along the Afghan-Pakistani frontier (which DFAIT's South Asia Division had initially run; it continues to manage the G-8 diplomatic offensive), in close coordination with our own Border Management Task Force in Kabul. START is taking on some of the programmatic aspects of this initiative, such as placing dog teams and scanners in Spin Boldak and other southern border posts. It will soon put an officer in Islamabad to help coordinate projects with Pakistan. Separately, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funds and runs more conventional programs on

health, education, and infrastructure. Initially uneasy competition between CIDA and START in Afghanistan (and elsewhere) have now evolved into a recognition of a genuine complementarity in their respective foci, according to START officials.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

18. (SBU) Other START projects over the past year have included:

- refurbishing the Sarpoza Prison and training correctional personnel in Afghanistan;
- sending police advisors and building an infrastructure to improve the Haitian National Police Inspector General's office;
- programs to improve Haiti's ability to combat human trafficking;
- support for the integrated community-based landmine risk education and victim assistance program in Uganda;
- initial funding and technical advice for e-learning for African peacekeepers from 50 African countries;
- providing helicopters, planes, aviation support fuel, and technical advisors in support of the AU mission in Darfur; and,
- coordinating Canada's assistance to Peru in the wake of Q-- coordinating Canada's assistance to Peru in the wake of the August 2007 earthquake.

AREAS FOR FURTHER COLLABORATION

19. (SBU) On the issue of post-conflict reconstruction, Canada recognizes explicit benefits from showing that its development of infrastructure and policies builds on the experiences of key partners. START officials cite to the Treasury Board Canada's close collaboration with like-minded

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allies as an effective argument for increased funding. START officials have expressed interest in closer coordination -- bilaterally, trilaterally also with Great Britain, and/or on a G-8 basis on:

- policy development and early warning systems on failed and fragile states;
- sharing "best practices" on training, notably the U.S. training model for pre-deployment of post-conflict reconstruction personnel;
- Justice Rapid Response;
- further country specific work, such as on Haiti and Sudan;
- "lessons learned" based on U.S. analyses of the architecture for post-conflict reconstruction, e.g. a PRT playbook developed by the U.S. Army Center for Lessons Learned.

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